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Michigan's social workers honor Sen. Hammerstrom

Senator recognized for advocacy, extraordinary public service

LANSING – During their Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet, the Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recently named state Sen. Beverly Hammerstrom, R-Temperance, their Public Citizen of the Year.

The NASW lauded Hammerstrom for her efforts to improve mental health services in Michigan, as well as her efforts to promote legislation to license social workers.

Hammerstrom sponsored Senate Bill 189, now Public Act 61 of 2004, which amends the Public Health Code and changes the regulation of social workers from a registered profession to a licensed profession. The new law also defines the scope of practice for social workers and allows them to enforce a code of ethics and standards of practice, bringing them in line with Michigan's many other licensed health care professionals.

"Senator Hammerstrom is an extraordinary advocate for mental health issues in our state," said Maxine Thome, executive director of the Michigan Chapter of NASW. "We are grateful for her support on the social workers licensure issue, as well as her service on the state Mental Health Commission. Senator Hammerstrom is an incredible voice for mental health consumers and their families."

Hammerstrom helped to re-write the state's mental health code while serving in the House of Representatives and continues to make mental health issues a priority as chair of the Senate Health Policy Committee.

"Michigan's social workers provide vital services for our most vulnerable residents," Hammerstrom said. "They strive to provide the highest quality care for Michigan's families. I'm honored to be recognized by such an outstanding group."

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